DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 286 995 CE 046 204

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TITLE Measuring Success. A Guidebook for Community Education Evaluation. Target Topic Series.
INSTITUTION College of St. Thomas, St. Paul, MN. Community Education Center.
SPONS AGENCY Mott (C.S.) Foundation, Flint, Mich.
PUB DATE 83
NOTE 72p.; For other guidebooks in this series, see CE 046 203-211.
AVAILABLE FROM The Community Education Center, College of St. Thomas, 2115 Summit Ave., St. Paul, MN 55101 ($3.50).
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Adult Education; *Community Education; *Models; Needs Assessment; Pretests Posttests; Program Development; *Program Evaluation; Program Implementation

ABSTRACT

This guidebook is one in the Target Topic Series developed to highlight issues and concerns related to effective community education operation. It is intended for the community educator and community education advisory council member who want to learn how to evaluate all aspects of their community education program. A pretest covers material discussed in the guidebook. The material explains why evaluation is important and presents a number of evaluation models. It then provides a program planning model of evaluation that encompasses needs assessment, program planning, program implementation, and program conclusion. A nine-step plan for conducting an evaluation follows and an example of the nine-step process is presented. A posttest repeats the pretest questions. Appendixes include a checklist for institutionalizing evaluation; standards for evaluations of educational programs, projects, and materials; and the Minnesota Local Program Review Self-Appraisal instrument. (YLB)

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TARGET TOPIC SERIES

MEASURING SUCCESS

A GUIDEBOOK FOR COMMUNITY EDUCATION EVALUATION

PATRICIA A. HAFF

MARTHA L. STANLEY

THE TARGET TOPIC SERIES is made possible by a grant from

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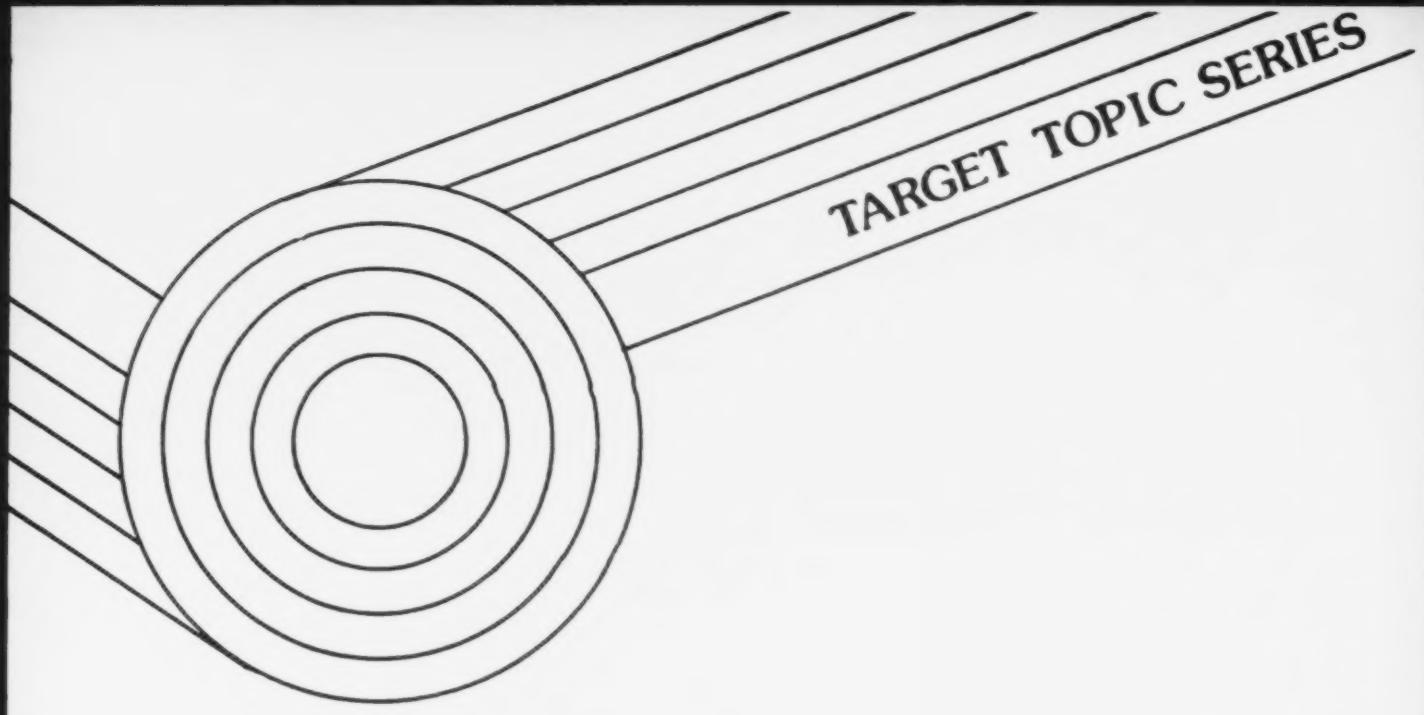


THE TARGET TOPIC SERIES

The Target Topic Series is a set of guidebooks developed for community educators and Community Education advisory council members. The guidebooks discuss many topics related to effective Community Education operation: Council Skills, Community Assessment, Planning, Public Relations, Finance, Programming, Legal Questions, Staff Development, Community Involvement, Coordination and Cooperation, and Evaluation.

The Target Topic Series is designed to highlight the skills or the issues that relate to each subject; and presents an overview which should be of value to the reader.

The Series was developed in response to an identified need for materials to aid and enrich the Community Education process in the state of Minnesota, particularly for areas that do not have ready access to in-service opportunities. The materials are applicable to Community Education programs throughout the country and are available for national distribution.

The Target Topic Series is written by staff members of the Community Education Center at the College of St. Thomas and by Community Education professionals in Minnesota. The series is distributed by the Community Education Center at the College of St. Thomas.

The interpretations and conclusions contained in this publication represent the views of the author and not necessarily those of the Mott Foundation, its trustees, or officers.

FOREWORD

Community educators and advisory council members do an excellent job of creating the process and developing the programs that meet the needs of community members. They do so because they are committed to the philosophy of Community Education which underscores the belief that people must be involved in decisions that affect them. Consequently they use needs assessment and sound planning techniques to guarantee that Community Education efforts are directed to the greatest good.

For the most part these efforts result in high quality, properly conducted programs. However, when programs are not as good as they should be, we often don't know why. Sometimes we guess, sometimes we have an intuitive hunch and sometimes we make modest evaluation efforts to uncover the causes. We tend to avoid formal evaluation unless it is required. We find it to be extra work, difficult to do and not really worth the effort.

Evaluation is a critical element in the total Community Education process. It is the element that allows Community Education to take a serious look at itself so that it can change, adapt and grow. This guidebook, Measuring Success,will help make evaluation meaningful and do-able. It provides tools for conducting evaluations and presents a process that can be adapted to any program.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction	1
Pre-Test	2
Evaluation: What Is It?	4
What Should be Evaluated?	5
Why Evaluate?	6
Conditions To Be Met When Evaluating	7
Evaluation Models	9
Program Planning Model of Evaluation	12
Needs Assessment	13
Program Planning	14
Program Implementation	15
Program Conclusion	16
Nine Steps of Program Evaluation	18
Writing A Program Description	18
Identifying the Audience	19
Identifying Program Parts to be Evaluated	19
Developing General Evaluation Questions	20
Developing An Evaluation Plan	20
Selecting Methods for Collecting Information	27
Collecting the Information	34
Analyzing the Data	34
Reporting Evaluation Results	35
An Example of the Nine-Step Process	36
Evaluation: An End And A Beginning	42
Post-Test	43
References	45
Appendices	46
1. Checklist For Institutionalizing Evaluation	47
2. Evaluation Standards of Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation	51
3. Minnesota Local Program Review Self-Analysis	56

INTRODUCTION

This guidebook is for the community educator and the Community Education advisory council member who want to learn how to evaluate all aspects of their Community Education program. The material explains why evaluation is important and describes how to conduct a successful evaluation.

The guidebook covers the process of evaluation, how to develop an evaluation plan, and how the information can be used to improve Community Education. Included is a step-by-step plan for conducting an evaluation.

Measuring Success is a tool to assist you in developing an evaluation to fit the needs of your program. Its purpose is to provide a workable process for conducting evaluations so that Community Education can continually respond to the changing needs in your community.

WHAT DO YOU KNOW?

(The following questions cover the material which is discussed in this guidebook. We suggest you answer them before reading the text. Your answers will point out your present level of knowledge and will make you aware of areas to which you should pay particular attention.)

1. What is the primary purpose of evaluation in Community Education?
2. What are two important secondary purposes of evaluation?
3. Why are some people reluctant to evaluate?
4. List all possible areas for evaluation in Community Education.
5. What conditions should evaluations satisfy?
6. Why is it important that an evaluation be useful?
7. Why is feasibility important in evaluation?
8. Are ethics important in evaluation? Why?
9. How important is accuracy in evaluation?
10. What is input evaluation?
11. What is context evaluation?
12. What is process evaluation?
13. What is product evaluation?
14. How does formative evaluation relate to input evaluation?
15. Is summative evaluation the same as product evaluation?
16. Can peer review be effective?
17. In what ways can an evaluation expert be utilized?
18. Does evaluation occur during a needs assessment?
19. What role does evaluation play in program planning?
20. Are there evaluation functions during program implementation? What are they?
21. What evaluation questions are asked at the conclusion of a program?
22. Is it important to identify audiences which will be interested in evaluation results? Why?
23. How do you determine what and how much of the program needs to be evaluated?
24. How do you determine general evaluation questions?
25. What would you include in an evaluation plan?
26. How do you determine who will conduct an evaluation?
27. Compare advantages and disadvantages of inside and outside evaluators?

28. Identify several methods for obtaining evaluation information.
29. Does data analysis require a person familiar with statistics?
30. Is an evaluation report important? Why?
31. List some reasons why evaluation is worth the effort.
32. How can Community Education effectively use the information obtained through evaluation?

EVALUATION: WHAT IS IT?

"The most important purpose of evaluation is not to prove but to improve."

This statement by Daniel Stufflebeam, expert in education evaluation and chair of the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, describes the purpose of evaluation in Community Education--to improve the process and programs of Community Education so that the needs of community members are met effectively and efficiently. Without methods for determining if Community Education is as good as it can be and without standards to judge its value, Community Education runs the risk of becoming stagnant, inappropriate, misfocused or misunderstood.

A sound evaluation process and plan provides the methods and standards by which Community Education can assure that what it does is current, responsive, known by the community and of the highest quality possible. A sound evaluation process and plan guarantees that decisions in Community Education are based on information, assessment, feedback, and comparison rather than on intuition or best guesses.

Evaluation is an integral component of the Community Education process. Its importance is touted by most writers in the field and stressed at workshops and conferences. Nevertheless, evaluation (up to now) has remained one of the least popular tasks in Community Education and is the responsibility most slighted by community educators. Why is this so?

Several possible reasons exist for the lack of attention by community educators to evaluation.

- Evaluation is often seen as negative judgment. Because humans do not like to be judged, they tend to shy away from judging others.
- The evaluation process is seen as complex and beyond the abilities of the community educator. Evaluation conjures up visions of statistical analyses and complex mathematical interpretations.
- Evaluation is viewed as an after-the-fact procedure and is not appealing to action-oriented community educators who want to get on with the program.

- Evaluation is tedious because it is other-generated and/or a requirement. By the time that reports are made to school boards and state departments of education there is little interest in evaluating further.

- Evaluation has little value. Often, after the work is all done, little seems to come of it.

These reasons are often seen as barriers to initiating an evaluation plan for Community Education. However, if the purposes and uses of evaluation are understood and if the community educator learns how to use the basic evaluation tools, the reasons lose any validity as deterrents to evaluation.

What Should Be Evaluated?

The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation defined evaluation as "the systematic investigation of the worth or merit of some object." The Committee further defined evaluation according to the object being evaluated.

Program evaluations are those that assess activities which provide services on a continuing basis. In Community Education, this definition would include the total Community Education program and those parts of it (such as class offerings and pre-school programs) which are of a continuing nature.

Project evaluations are those that assess activities that are time-limited, that is, those which are set up for a particular time period. In Community Education this definition includes year-long trial projects and short term activities such as a National Community Education Day program in a community.

Materials evaluations are those that assess the worth of content-related items such as the brochure, news articles, slide-tape presentations and so on.

These three classifications point to many areas within Community Education which should be evaluated and about which decisions for continuation or modification should be made.

These areas include:

- District policies on Community Education
- Needs/resource assessment process
- Goals and objectives of the entire program
- Advisory council goals and objectives
- Advisory council functioning

- Classes/Activities
- Recreational programs
- Separate programs: senior citizens, handicapped, early childhood
- Special events: community fairs, health fairs, workshops
- Community involvement
- Interagency cooperation
- Organization and staffing
- Teachers and staff performance
- Public relations efforts
- Evaluation process

The above listing is intended to include every part of a Community Education program. Because time, talent, effort and resources are devoted to all facets of Community Education and because our goal is to provide the best possible service to the community, it is necessary that we investigate the worth or merit of everything we do. It makes little sense to determine that a teacher is doing a good job if the class is not appropriate. Similarly, it makes little sense to judge advisory council goals without looking at the total program goals.

Learning that everything in Community Education should be evaluated may seem a little overwhelming at this point. However, once an evaluation process is determined and an evaluation plan is put into effect, the procedures become an integral part of each component of the program and can be conducted as a matter of course.

Why Evaluate?

The main purpose of any evaluation is to improve. In Community Education, evaluation provides information that is used for decision making and to plan better programs. A thorough evaluation process looks at the total picture and points out if program objectives truly relate to identified needs. Evaluation equates efforts with results and looks at the cost effectiveness of the use of resources to provide services. Evaluation helps advisory councils and Community Education staff determine if modifications need to be made, if certain programs need to be eliminated and if additional programs need to be added.

A second purpose of evaluation is to meet accountability requirements. Many state departments of education require an annual report on local Community Education programs. These reports may ask for numbers of persons served, evidence of advisory council participation in decision-making, budget reports, and the various audiences served by them. In addition, many local Community Education programs receive funding from state agencies or programs and also from foundations and businesses. Each of these groups may ask for formal evaluation reports on the programs they fund or help fund.

A third purpose of evaluation is to promote understanding of the total Community Education program or any part of it. This purpose of evaluation serves a political and public relations function. If (assumedly) a Community Education program is doing an excellent job of serving the residents of a school district, the evaluation will point this out to community members, other agencies and local and state decision makers.

Conditions To Be Met When Evaluating

No matter what is evaluated--the total Community Education program or part of it--and no matter what the purpose of the evaluation--program or process improvement, accountability or understanding--the evaluation should satisfy four conditions. It should be useful, feasible, ethical and accurate. Failure to meet these conditions results in the objections to evaluation which were described above.

All evaluations should be useful. There is little point in collecting information which is meaningless and which will not be used. Information on the strengths and weaknesses of a program should be provided to those persons and groups who are responsible for the program, who use the program or who fund the program.

Feasibility is another important condition to be met when conducting an evaluation. The major question is: is the information readily available and can it be collected without interfering in the operation of the program? Too often overly ambitious data collection efforts are initiated. Needless information is gathered in quantity and no one can determine a practical method for dealing with it. Evaluations should seek information that is useful and that can be gathered using available resources. Finding out things that are interesting but not useful may well be a waste of time and effort.

If data collection is required by outside agencies and the requirement places a major burden on the Community Education program, it may be wise to ask the agency the purpose for which the information will be used. Often state and agency reports grow like Topsy--without any master plan. Community educators could serve the agencies and themselves by reminding the agencies of the conditions of feasibility and usefulness.

A third condition to be satisfied when conducting an evaluation is that the evaluation is ethical. Ethics require that humans be respected and that their rights and welfare be protected. Ethics also require that there be full and frank disclosure of pertinent findings. While there may be a temptation to report only favorable information, the purpose of evaluation is to determine both strengths and weaknesses.

A confidential evaluation of an employee should be kept confidential if such an agreement has been made. If the evaluation uncovers information

of a nature that would cause the employee to be terminated, he or she should be advised that the report will be made.

The final condition to be considered when conducting an evaluation is that the evaluation be accurate. The reason for the evaluation should be described as well as the methods and procedures to be used in the evaluation. The sources of information should be provided so that their adequacy and validity can be assessed. The data should be checked for accuracy and flawed data should be eliminated from the analysis. Careful methods of analysis should be employed and the methods should be explained in the evaluation report. For example, if class participation is counted over a year's time, the report should indicate that the numbers may represent the same persons enrolling for more than one course. Qualitative or subjective data should be analyzed with care. While this information is vital in knowing opinions and perceptions about Community Education, its interpretation is subject to bias on the part of the interpreter. A panel of interpreters works well to correct the bias implicit when a single person does the analysis of qualitative data.

EVALUATION MODELS

Prior to the mid 1960's, most evaluation in education was outcome evaluation. This method, developed by Ralph Tyler in 1942 compared results with objectives. Several educators interested in evaluation modified and improved the evaluation work done by Tyler as a result of the federal government's demand for better evaluation.

Daniel Stufflebeam (1969) felt that evaluation should be viewed as a process to aid in decision making. He began his model of evaluation with two of the four components that make up his final model. These two--process and product evaluation--provided a new emphasis for evaluation. Stufflebeam's process evaluation did not look at end results. By evaluating the process, operational problems and dysfunctional methods could be observed, analyzed and altered. Programs could be modified in the implementation stage and thus problems could be recognized well before the program had reached its conclusion.

Product evaluation looked at the end product, as had earlier evaluation methods. By evaluating what the project or program had produced, decisions could be made about continuation or termination. Stufflebeam's product evaluation did not compare results with goals, primarily because, in his opinion, most goals were not clear and specific. To correct this gap in his evaluation system, he added the final two components--context evaluation and input evaluation.

Context evaluation helps to develop goals. It assesses the situation, the setting and the needs of participants. Context evaluation is similar to the needs assessment process that is basic to Community Education. It helps to assure that goals and objectives can directly relate to the assessed needs.

The final component added by Stufflebeam is input evaluation. This completes his CIPP process (Context, Input, Process, Product). Input evaluations provide judgments about the structure of a program or project. They look at procedures, schedules, staffing plans and budgets. The CIPP model is a complete evaluation system that goes hand-in-hand with sound planning, organization and implementation. It begins with needs assessment and continues through the setting of goals, the structuring of the program, conducting or implementing the program and finally to assessing the outcome or results.

Michael Scriven (1970) developed a different evaluation approach which he termed formative-summative evaluation. This method today is not in conflict with the CIPP model although there are some differences. Scriven refers to formative evaluation as that in which an evaluator collects and reports data and judgments to assist in the development of a project. Needs assessment in Community Education operates in much the same way although rarely is an outside evaluator used in the collection and analysis of data. While Scriven felt that formative evaluation was important, he believed that summative evaluation was critical. In the Scriven model an outside evaluator is employed to conduct a summative (final) evaluation of the results of a project or program and this evaluator compares the results with the results of other competing projects or programs.

The words of Scriven's evaluation process have been used by community educators essentially in a synonym fashion: formative to be on-going and summative to mean final evaluation. The use of these words in this fashion is not completely accurate. It should be remembered that these education evaluation models were developed to evaluate curriculum and classroom programs. As these programs were being designed, background data and analysis (formative evaluation) were employed to aid in their construction. And, when the curriculum or program had reached its termination date, it was evaluated and compared with competing curricula and programs (summative evaluation) in order to determine which should be used in a widespread fashion. However, formative evaluation is an appropriate term to describe evaluation in which Community Education programs are studied and modified during their development.

Before moving to the next section which outlines a model of evaluation, two other evaluation methods need to be addressed. Internal-external is a term used to describe a system in which, for the most part, the program design and structure are evaluated by those directly involved, and then the final product--the process, the results and the materials--are evaluated by an outside evaluator. Outside evaluators may also be used in a process called metaevaluation. In this process, a total evaluation plan is developed and conducted internally, and the plan and the resulting evaluation are evaluated by the outside "expert." It makes good sense for Community Education programs that are initiating evaluation plans to request that Community Education Centers or other outside agencies skilled in evaluation conduct a metaevaluation of their evaluation plans and results.

An additional method of outside evaluation, that of peer review, has been used successfully in Community Education. In Minnesota, a Program Review Team is employed by a local Community Education program to analyze the effectiveness of the local program and to recognize strengths and point out areas for improvement. The team is made up of representatives from the Minnesota Community Education Association, the State Department of Education, the State Advisory Council, as well as local Community Education directors, advisory council members, superintendents and school board members. Team members, prior to the on-site visit, review materials related to the goals and objectives of the local program. The one-day Local Program Review visit consists of interviews of people related to or

involved in Community Education and an analysis of the findings discovered during the visit. The report is written by the team leader; team members react to the report, and when accuracy is assured, the report is presented to the local director or superintendent.

Evaluation team visits of one or two days duration cannot truly evaluate a program but this method provides many possibilities for improvement. Because the local district requests the review, it commits to take a serious look at its Community Education program. The director and the advisory council prepare a self-analysis of the total program and its components and most often the assessment is consistent with the findings of the evaluation team. The other advantage of being evaluated by a team made up of experts and peers, is that the local program can benefit from the knowledge that the team has about other successful programs.

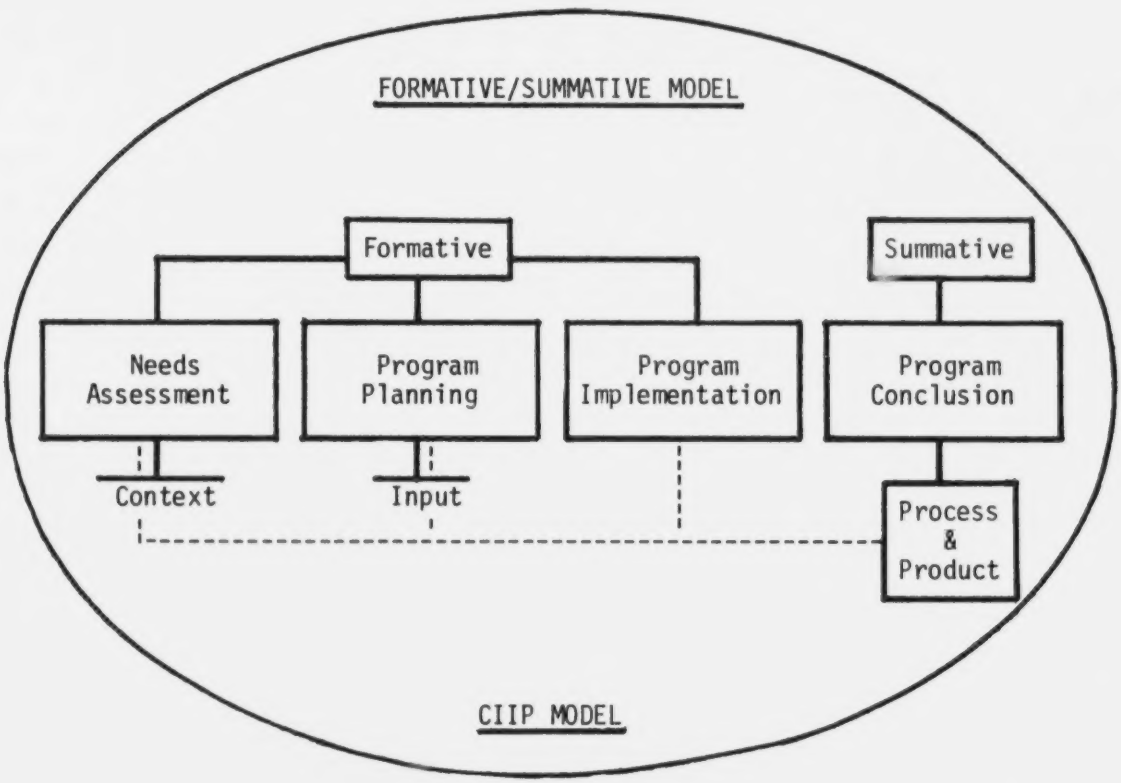
The nature of Community Education requires that we evaluate more than the relative merits of competing classes. We need to plan effective programs based on identified needs, we need to implement these programs effectively and efficiently, and then we need to know if these programs indeed did what they were intended for and if they should be modified, eliminated or continued. We also are required to be accountable and we have an obligation to let our community members know the results of our efforts in their behalf.

Each of the evaluation models presented above provide guidance for evaluating Community Education programs and we can learn much from them. The following section provides a step-by-step process for evaluating a Community Education program and this material draws heavily on the work of education evaluators.

PROGRAM PLANNING MODEL OF EVALUATION

The Community Education process in which community resources are used to meet community needs generally results in programs. These programs include single and longer-term classes and activities as well as on-going programs that serve senior citizens, pre-schoolers and others. All of these programs as well as the process by which they are derived must be evaluated--measured, analyzed, compared and judged--in order to assure that needs are met in the most efficient and effective manner.

The following model is presented to stress that evaluation is a continuous process intended to improve Community Education. The top half of the graphic depicts the Formative/Summative Model and the bottom half shows the CIPP model: the relationship is apparent.



Needs Assessment

In order for Community Education programs to serve the needs and interests of community members, it is necessary that these needs and interests be known. The process for learning this information is called needs assessment.

A needs assessment is also an evaluation, similar to that of Stufflebeam's context evaluation. A comprehensive Community Education needs assessment identifies facts, figures, opinions, feelings and trends which provide decision makers with the information they need to make program decisions.

Needs assessments may be conducted in several ways. Formal assessment is generally done either by written survey or personal interview. Less formal, but equally valid needs assessment consists of information presented by advisory council members' presentation of their constituents' views, the opinion of current class participants and word-of-mouth.

The assessment process also includes finding out what services and programs are being offered by other groups in the community and determining what resources are potentially available for use by Community Education. Information about existing programs and the availability of resources may be obtained through interview and also from advisory council members' knowledge of the community.*

Not only is needs assessment an evaluation itself, it is itself subject to process and product evaluation. Questions to be asked about assessment include:

- Are the assessment instruments reliable? Do they ask the proper questions that produce useful information? Are they too long or too short?
- Were interviewers and poll takers properly trained?
- Were survey and interview results obtained from a representative sample?

* For a more complete discussion of needs assessment, read Martha L. Stanley, Knowing Your Community: A Guidebook for Community Assessment, Community Education Center, College of St. Thomas, St. Paul, MN 55105.

- Were the subjects of surveys and interviews treated with respect? If the information was guaranteed to be confidential, was the guarantee met? Were unnecessary and improper questions asked?
- Was the information gathered in a cost-effective manner?
- Was the tabulation and analysis conducted accurately?
- Were the assessment reports clear, timely and available to the proper people?
- Was the input from council members the result of their accurate knowledge of their constituents' needs or were they merely their best guesses?

Program Planning

The important process of program planning follows the completion of the assessment work. During this process, goals and objectives for the total program and for its individual components are established.

Formative or input evaluation take place at this stage. In addition to the information obtained through the assessment process, other information must be gathered before the community educator and the council can set goals and objectives.

School district policies, goals and directives to the Community Education program need to be obtained. The existing Community Education goals and the previous program need to be analyzed for currency and effectiveness. Also, cost figures and staffing needs must be studied.

At this point, judgments need to be made based on all the information. When the decisions are made, based on rank ordered priorities, the programs, goals and objectives are determined.

Because part of the evaluation process compares results with stated goals and objectives, it is imperative that goals are clear and that objectives are measurable.*

The program planning phase, like needs assessment, is evaluated using process and product evaluation. Questions to be asked about the program planning include:

* For a complete discussion of program planning, read Martha L. Stanley, Charting Your Course: A Guidebook for Community Education Planning, Community Education Center, College of St. Thomas, St. Paul, MN 55105.

- Was appropriate and sufficient information used in making decisions about the program?
- Were those charged with implementing the program(s) involved in the decision making?
- Do the goals and objectives relate to needs?
- Are the goals broad general statements about the program and are they clearly stated?
- Are the objectives attainable and measurable?
- Were program costs and staffing needs taken into account?
- Will each objective provide evidence for evaluation?

Program Implementation

Following careful planning, Community Education programs are implemented. Evaluation becomes a part of the day-by-day operation of each program. Each program must be monitored by the person who is responsible for it. The monitoring process includes keeping records, tabulating numbers, collecting materials that relate to the operation of the program, and recording financial information.

Good programs are not allowed to run their course without the benefit of evaluation. A program that is in difficulty or is not as good as it could be can be modified in mid-stream. Formative evaluation which looks at process and product and which looks back to information obtained through context and input evaluation can be very effective in correcting or modifying a faltering program. It is often difficult in the planning stage to foresee just how a program will operate. By using a formative evaluation, programs can be adapted to meet the realities that appear as the program proceeds.

Evaluation during the implementation stage addresses many questions:

- Are the objectives of the programs accurate or do they need to be revised?
- Were the projected costs and income figures reasonable?
- Is the program serving the audience it was designed to serve?
- Is there sufficient staff to implement the program effectively?
- Do job descriptions match actual duties?

- Are outreach efforts effective?
- Is the program meeting the needs it was designed to meet?
- What changes or modifications could improve the program?

Program Conclusion

Within Community Education many programs are on-going; they do not end. However, for purposes of this discussion on how evaluation is used throughout a program cycle, the term program conclusion is used to signify that time when all components of a program are reviewed and evaluated. Classes and time-limited programs do conclude and they are evaluated at the time they cease. Continuing programs are evaluated at the end of a particular time period--the period for which the goals and objectives were established. Generally this occurs once a year and in time for the planning process to begin anew.

A final summative evaluation looks at each component of the Community Education program and also at the total program. This evaluation appraises the entire program process from the initiation of needs assessment through the final individual program reports.

Again, it should be remembered that the purpose of an evaluation is to improve a program or process. The secondary purposes of meeting accountability requirements and of providing information to community members and others should also be kept in mind when conducting a final evaluation.

The questions that guided the preceding evaluations are all appropriate questions to be asked in a final evaluation.

- Were goals and objectives designed to meet identified needs?
- Were the objectives met? If not, why not?
- Were costs and income projections accurate?
- Were staff and teachers properly trained?
- Did staff and teachers perform their responsibilities in an effective manner?
- Were publicity and public relations efforts sufficient to attract participation and to provide information about the program to the community?
- Were monitoring efforts complete? Is there accurate information on participation, financial matters, end products?

- Were written materials of high quality?
- Were final class and program evaluations conducted?
- Were final reports submitted?

NINE STEPS OF PROGRAM EVALUATION

A straight-forward, logical process exists for program evaluation. The process guides the evaluator and provides the framework for determining what, when and how to evaluate. The nine steps that make up the process are listed below and an elaboration of them follows the listing:

1. Writing a program description
2. Identifying the audience to receive the information
3. Identifying program parts to be evaluated
4. Developing general evaluation questions
5. Developing an evaluation plan
6. Selecting methods for collecting information
7. Collecting the information
8. Analyzing the data
9. Reporting evaluation results.

Writing A Program Description

The description provides an overview of the program. It should contain a brief statement of the purposes of the program, its major activities, the resources used and the results expected. The description serves to clarify what is to be evaluated and can be used as an outline for the evaluation. It should be brief and should use simple, clear language.

Identifying The Audience

Every evaluation has a targeted audience or audiences which will use the information for a special purpose or purposes. As the major intent of an evaluation is to improve existing programs, the primary audience consists of those who are directly involved with the program--decision makers including the director and the council, the State Department of Education-the school board and administration, program heads and program staff. Other audiences could be city officials, funding agencies, cooperating agencies and community members.

In addition to identifying the audiences which are interested in evaluation results, it is also necessary to determine why a particular audience desires information and how it will use the information. When the audience and its needs for evaluation information are known, it becomes possible to plan the evaluation so that it will elicit the appropriate data.

Evaluations are conducted basically for the good of the program. If careful monitoring and recording have occurred during the time period covered by the evaluation and if the final evaluation is thorough, data will exist to serve the purposes of all the audiences. Rarely is an evaluation conducted for a single audience, although a single audience--for example, the State Department of Education--may receive a report that is specific to its request for information. However, the data that is reported is gleaned from the total data that is collected during the evaluation process.

Identifying Program Parts To Be Evaluated

The third step in the evaluation process is to determine what parts or how much of the program will be evaluated. The needs of an identified audience (as defined in steps one and two) will help determine the specific parts or components that should be evaluated. For example, the community involvement aspect of the program may be specifically assessed one year. Another year the evaluation may be more comprehensive and will include all the segments of the Community Education program. The important thing is to select which parts of the program are to be evaluated.

The scope of the evaluation will also be determined in part by the cost and resources available. Even a program with few resources is able to evaluate the major portions of its year's work if it develops a comprehensive evaluation plan and commits itself to follow the plan.

Developing General Evaluation Questions

In the fourth step the "big" questions that the audience considers important in making decisions are determined. These general questions are not items for an evaluation questionnaire but rather are questions that identify major issues that need to be addressed by the eventual collection of data. One way of clearly determining these questions or issues is by completing the following statement:

"If _____ is going to use evaluation information for
(audience)

_____ he/she/they will want to know
(purpose)

"
_____.
(one or more questions/issues)

It is extremely important to involve the expected users of the evaluation results in generating appropriate questions. A brain-storming session with advisory council members, staff or other users might help in determining questions. It is never a good idea to leave the entire development of these critical questions to the director or an outside evaluator without input from those who will use the information. Writing general evaluation questions is not difficult and does not require any great skill. Simply write brief, complete questions about what the targeted audiences want to know.

One way to approach writing these questions is to look at existing program goals and objectives. Other sources from which questions might come are: job descriptions, funding applications, advisory council by-laws, interagency agreements and so on. The written questions should be put in order of importance at the start (by the audience needing the information) as cost, time and availability of information might limit the number of questions that can be asked.

Developing An Evaluation Plan

After the program parts to be evaluated are identified and general evaluation questions are determined, then the overall evaluation plan for collecting and analyzing the information can be designed.

There are many evaluation designs that could be used to evaluate the Community Education program. Many designs are elaborate and involve a great deal of time and money. These complex designs may not be possible or appropriate for evaluating Community Education programs. Administrators and others needing the evaluation need to clearly think about what kind of evaluation plan would be the most suitable considering all the resources available.

Following are some elements that need to be considered when developing an evaluation design for local program needs.

- DETERMINE THE STANDARDS OR CRITERIA TO BE USED IN CONSIDERING EACH GENERAL EVALUATION QUESTION.

  Because evaluation is judgment, standards against which results are to be compared need to be established. One criteria could be the full performance of each of the written objectives. Another could be 90 percent fulfillment of job description responsibilities. In the subjective areas of opinion and attitude, general standards will have to be agreed upon.

- SPECIFY RESOURCES THAT WILL BE NEEDED FOR THE EVALUATION.

  Resources can be determined by answering these three questions:

  1. How much money is needed for the evaluation and how much is available?

  2. How much time is needed for the evaluation?

  3. How many people will be needed to carry out the evaluation?

- IDENTIFY THE POSSIBLE SOURCES TO BE USED IN ANSWERING THE EVALUATION QUESTIONS.

  Determine who will be interviewed for the evaluation and who has the information needed to answer the evaluation questions. Will reports to funders, program performance results, or other documents be of use in answering evaluation questions? Will one source be more applicable in another instance? Is more than one source needed for some questions?

  One way to determine who has the information is to use a matrix similar to the one on page twenty three. Across the top of the page list the big questions you want to answer such as work with K-12 program, inter-agency cooperation, programs and so on. Down the left side of the page list all the various community audiences that would have information. Then simply check the appropriate box in the body of the matrix.

- DETERMINE HOW MANY PEOPLE MUST BE CONTACTED TO PRODUCE THE PROPER EVALUATION RESULTS.

  This determination will depend on how precise the evaluation results need to be. If a high level of precision is needed, a professional evaluator who will use sophisticated information-gathering techniques may be needed. Program decisions involving large sums of money or a major social change might demand more sophisticated evaluation results, but often these elaborate techniques are not desirable or possible. Some simple sampling such as interviewing every tenth house or a single class might be sufficient. The important thing to remember is that the sample chosen to question must be representative of the large groups and must be chosen at random.*

* For a more complete discussion of random sampling see Martha L. Stanley, Knowing Your Community: A Guidebook for Community Assessment, Community Education Center, College of St. Thomas, St. Paul, MN 55105.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION FOR EVALUATION

INFORMATION NEEDED ABOUT:

GROUPS	Community Involvement	Programs	Interagency Cooperation	K-12	Building Use
Program Participants					
Program Non-Participants					
Advisory Council					
Community Power Groups					
Community Education Staff					
Other Community Organizations					

IDENTIFY WHO IS GOING TO DO THE EVALUATION

The advisory council can provide the leadership and/or coordination for evaluation of the Community Education program. A committee within the advisory council might be established for this task. This committee can organize and coordinate the steps in the evaluation process and can determine who should actually carry out the evaluation. Members of the advisory council can serve as evaluators for some or all of the evaluation efforts.

The community educator and the council should decide whether to use an outside evaluator or to conduct the evaluation with existing staff. There are many issues to consider when deciding whether to use an outside evaluator or to conduct the appraisal from within. Some of the reasons for using an outside person are:

- An outside evaluator has technical skills for conducting an evaluation.
- Some funding sources may require sophisticated evaluation results that only an outside person can provide.
- Outside evaluators have the needed time to carry out an adequate appraisal.
- An outside expert is more likely to get cooperation from some audiences or sources in the planning and carrying out of the evaluation.
- If the information needed is somewhat sensitive, an outside person is more likely to get honest answers.
- Sometimes the evaluation results seem more credible if an outside evaluator is used.

Another thing to keep in mind is that it is possible to have an outside expert for only part of the evaluation. He or she may do only the parts where sensitivity and credibility are issues. The outside expert may also act as a technical consultant rather than as the evaluator.

There are also some good reasons for using a local evaluation person or persons actually involved in the Community Education program. Some of these are:

- Local evaluators are especially important for the formative or ongoing evaluation of your program.
- Evaluation can sometimes be done in a more timely fashion with a local evaluator as there would probably be more flexibility in collecting the information and meeting deadlines.
- Doing the evaluation (or parts of it) could be an educational experience for local people. As was mentioned earlier it is particularly desirable to involve program participants, advisory council persons and other community members in as much of your Community Education evaluation as possible.
- An outside evaluator may sometimes cause local people (respondents) to become unnecessarily apprehensive and defensive.
- Outside evaluators are often quite expensive and the level of evaluation needed does not require large expenditure of money.

DETERMINE A TIME FRAME FOR EVALUATION

The time frame for an evaluation is determined by two factors: when the information is required by, or most useful for, the audience interested in the evaluation results and also by when the data or results of a program are available for collection and study. The first factor determines the concluding date and the second factor provides the date for initiating the evaluation.

The amount of time needed depends on the complexity of the evaluation and on the availability of personnel (either staff or outside evaluators) to collect and analyze the data and to write the summary report. The following chart shows a formal needs assessment/evaluation plan and includes the three important elements of a needs assessment/evaluation time frame: how often a particular assessment or evaluation should be conducted, when the evaluation should begin and when it should be completed.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT EVALUATION PLAN

INFORMATION NEEDED	HOW OFTEN	Information Collection START	END	THE PROCESS	COORDINATOR & COUNCIL INVOLVEMENT
I. NEEDS ASSESSMENT					
A. DEMOGRAPHIC/RESOURCE INFO.					
Population Information Economics Information	Every 4 yrs.	9/83 9/88 etc.	11/83 11/88 etc.	Coordinator collects available data and prepares report.	Coordinator responsible for data collection and report writing. Council reviews reports.
Facilities Information Groups/Organizations Community Ed. Program	Every 2 yrs.				
B. COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT					
Four Year Assessment	Every 4 yrs.	9/85 9/89 etc.	11/85 11/87 etc.	Questionnaire mailed to all homes. Feedback given via media.	Coordinator is responsible. Adv. Council reviews questionnaire, data interpretation, and report draft.
Two Year, Interim Assessment	Every 2 yrs.	9/83 9/88 etc.	11/83 11/88 etc.	Questionnaires mailed to post participants only.	
C. STUDENT NEEDS ASSESSMENT					
K-3 Assessment	Yearly OR Every Other Year	9/84 9/86 etc.	3/84 3/86 etc.	Students given a take-home questionnaire which parent completes.	Coordinator is responsible, works with principals and teachers. Adv. Council reviews questionnaire and report draft.
4-8 Assessment		10/84 10/86 etc.	4/84 4/86 etc.	Students take home questionnaire which parents or students complete.	
9-12 Assessment		11/84 11/86 etc.	5/84 5/86 etc.	Students complete in-school questionnaire. Input collected from teachers, coaches, etc.	

INFORMATION NEEDED	HOW OFTEN	Information Collection START	END	THE PROCESS	COORDINATOR & COUNCIL INVOLVEMENT
D. SPECIAL GROUPS					
• Pre-schoolers (0-5) • Seniors • Handicapped • Program Participants	Every 4 yrs. with 2 yr. Interim Assessment	Same as Cmty. (I.B.)	N.A.	Same process as the Cmty. N.A.(IB). Specific questions designed for these groups.	Coordinator responsible. Adv. Council reviews questionnaire and report draft.
• Instructors	Yearly	1/84 1/85 etc.	3/84 3/85 etc.	Assessed quarterly by Coordinator. Assessed formally once a yr. by phone or letter.	
II. EVALUATION					
A. PROGRAM EVALUATION					
•Early Childhood Prog. •Youth Programs	Qrtly. and Yearly	4/83 4/84 etc.	6/83 6/84 etc.	End-of-course questionnaire given to all participants. If questionnaire return is poor, a 5-10% sample of participants is phoned annually. Needs assessment questions are also asked.	Coordinator responsible. Adv. Council reviews questionnaires and report draft.
•Adult Programs •Senior Programs		5/83 5/84 etc.	7/83 7/84 etc.		
•Special Events	Yearly	8/83 8/84 etc.	10/83 10/84 etc.	For repeated Special Events only 50% or more of participants.	
•Program Dropouts	As Needed	---	---	If a problem, dropouts contacted by phone.	Area coordinator responsible. Adv. Council provides input.
B. INSTRUCTOR EVALUATION	Qrtly.	End - of - Course		Items for instructor evaluation included in evaluation form.	Area coordinator responsible. Information is confidential.
C. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES	Yearly	5/83 5/84 etc.	6/84 6/85 etc.	Scale for degree of accomplishment added to each objective. Each objective is rated by coordinator and Council.	Area coordinator responsible. Goals and Objectives Committee works with Coordinator to develop scale.

* Prepared by East Central Community Education/Recreation Advisory Council; Lynn Wolf, Coordinator, and Barry Shaffer, Planning Specialist, St. Paul Public Schools, 1981.

PLAN FOR DATA ANALYSIS AND REPORTING

How will the results be analyzed? Is sophisticated statistical analysis needed or will simple averages and percentages suffice? Will the results be processed by hand or by computer? Does the staff have necessary skills to analyze the data? How will the report be handled? Who needs the report? Will it be a written, oral and/or visual report?

Selecting Methods For Collecting Information

After the preliminary planning process has been completed the next step is to select the methods or instruments for collecting the data needed for answering questions. There are a wide variety of ways to collect this data. Some of these appraisal methods are listed below.

Observations

- Goals and objectives
- Program and progress reports
- Records
  - Attendance
  - Class evaluations
  - Job performance
- Newspapers and other media
  - Book and journal research
  - Conversations

Questionnaires

- Descriptive response items
- Scale/number sequence
- Open-ended responses
- Choice of response

Interviews

- Structured
- Unstructured
- Face-to-face
- Telephone

Group Data

- Open forums
- Meetings
- Small group discussions and concensus
- Participant evaluation team
- Representative Council

In selecting one or more of these methods you should consider the following questions:

- How well does the selected appraisal method answer the audience questions? The method should be the most specific, the most complete, the most accurate and the most reliable.
- Is the method that is selected the best means of communicating with the people responding to the evaluation questions? Are these people or sources relatively easy to reach?
- Does the use of the method fit within the time frame?
- Does the use of the method fit within the allotted budget?

Any given evaluation may involve one or more data-gathering methods depending on the audience, purposes and sources available. A brief look at each of these data collection methods will assist in selecting the appropriate method for the desired outcome.

OBSERVATIONS - An observation is an appraisal method which does not interrupt the work flow or the process. Thus it is often used as a supplement to questionnaires or interviews. Observations include the following areas:

- Goals and Objectives. Goals and objectives are probably the first piece of information that an evaluator needs to review. Written goals and objectives will help an observer know the mission and intent of the program.
- Programs and Program Progress Reports. An observer would look at such objective data as what kinds and how many programs, activities and classes are offered for the various segments of the community. Observation of program progress records is also valuable for determining if the program is attaining its goals and objectives.
- Records. Some objective data can be obtained from records of all kinds. Some of this data might be collected from attendance at Community Education sponsored activities and classes, from midterm and end of class evaluations, from staff job performance records and so on.
- Newspapers and Other Media. An evaluator might look at the media to determine how well a Community Education program is functioning. Information about other community programs can be used for comparison in the evaluation.

- Book and Journal Research. Evaluators can research materials related to the effective running of Community Education programs. The results of this research can be used to set standards for evaluation or can be included in the evaluation report as suggestions for program improvement.

- Conversations. A trained evaluator may listen and record the conversations of people connected in a variety of ways to your program. This is a rather easy and common way to obtain some good subjective information such as quotes for the evaluation report.

QUESTIONNAIRES - One or more of four types of questions are used in the standard questionnaire. Examples of questions within each type are given below.

- Descriptive Response Questions. How helpful was the inservice training session for advisory council members to you?

  _____Very Helpful _____Reasonably Helpful
  _____More Unhelpful than Helpful _____Not at all Helpful

  These types of questionnaire items are generally easier for unsophisticated responders because the answers are chosen only from words offered.

- Scales/Number Sequence Questions. How helpful was the inservice training session for advisory council members to you?

  Very Helpful _____ Unhelpful
  4 3 2 1 0

  This type of question lends itself to numerical analysis and simplifies reporting. Sometimes numbers are important to an audience and, in addition, numbers can be used for comparison.

- Choice of Response Questions. Check the items below that most clearly represent what you learned at the advisory council inservice?

  _____Better understanding of the role of the council.
  _____Better understanding of the purpose of Community Education.
  _____How to improve personal communication skills.
  _____I became better acquainted with other council members.
  _____What constitutes a good meeting.
  _____How to deal with members who try to take over.
  _____Other (please describe)_____

  Questions of this type provide more information than the first two examples but are not as open as the next example.

- Open-Ended Response Questions. Name three important things you learned from the advisory council inservice.

  _____

  _____

  _____

  What suggestions would you make for improving the inservice?

  _____

  _____

  _____

Developing good questionnaires and good questions is a skill which is learned through practice. Each question and each questionnaire should be reviewed by several people and should be field tested. Some tips for producing good questionnaires are:

- All items on the questionnaire should come directly from the issues questions of the determined audience(s) and purpose(s). All items that are not related to these questions should be excluded.

- Put related items together. Questions should follow some logical order.

- Give a brief description of the activity being evaluated. This will help the responder remember the focus of the activity, process or situation being evaluated.

- Narrow the scope of open-ended questions as much as possible.

- Avoid asking for overall reactions to a class situation or process. Try to tell them exactly what you are looking for.

- Tie open-ended questions into number sequence questions.

- Ask "why" questions whenever possible. This will cut down on the tendency towards superficial answers. The "why" information will be helpful in making decisions about program changes.

- "Field test" all questionnaires. Any kind of "field test" provides information about needed changes in the questionnaire. It could be given to a real sample audience, to co-workers, or friends who would answer by role-playing.

- Avoid jargon and unfamiliar technical terms.

- Encourage people to respond to the questionnaire by helping them understand why you need the information, how long it will take to complete and so on. This could be done with introduction, a cover letter or in other ways.*

INTERVIEWS - The interviewing method is helpful in instances in which more indepth complete data is needed. This verbal method of collecting data can be structured or unstructured, face-to-face or by telephone.

- Structured Interviews. Structured interviews are similar to structured questionnaires in that the answers to questions are assigned to a special category or a point on a scale.

- Unstructured Interviews. Unstructured interviews are similar to the open-ended response items on a questionnaire. The person being interviewed answers questions in his or her own words and those words are recorded directly by the interviewer. Typically, the general questions are pre-determined, but other questions may be generated by the answers given by the person being interviewed. The structured interview is easier to report, but the unstructured interview has the advantage of providing broader and more detailed information.

- Face-To-Face Interviews. Face-to-face interviewing allows the evaluator to capture more than just words--such as facial expression and body language--and therefore, more of the message.

- Telephone Interviews. Telephone interviews take less time, cost less and are usually quite effective. However, random telephone interviewing may be flawed because not every household has a phone.

Interviewing is an extremely time consuming way to collect data, and requires good training in interviewing skills. However, with sufficient training the advisory council and other community members can be very effective interviewers for Community Education evaluation.**

* For more detailed guidelines on developing and using questionnaires see Martha L. Stanley, Knowing Your Community: A Guidebook for Community Assessment, pages 33-40, Community Education Center, College of St. Thomas, St. Paul, MN 55105.

** For additional information in training interviewers see Martha L. Stanley, Knowing Your Community: A Guidebook for Community Assessment, pages 16-17. Community Education Center, College of St. Thomas, St. Paul, MN 55105.

The following table is a summary of the relative merits of interviewing versus questionnaires.

	Consideration	Interview	Questionnaire
1.	Personnel needed to collect data	Requires interviewers	Requires a clerk
2.	Major expense	Payment to interviewers	Postage and printing
3.	Opportunities for personalization	Extensive	Limited
4.	Opportunities for asking	Extensive	Limited
5.	Opportunities to probe (follow leads)	Possible	Difficult
6.	Relative magnitude of data reduction	Great	Mainly limited to rostering
7.	Typically, the number of repondents who can be reached	Limited	Extensive
8.	Rate of return	Good	Poor
9.	Sources of error	Interviewer, instrument, interpretation, sample	Limited to instrument and sample
10.	Emphasis on reading and writing skills	Limited	Extensive

GROUP DATA

Collecting group opinion and reactions can aid the evaluation process. Using a group approach for data collection has an advantage in that much information can be obtained in a relatively short period of time and in one location. Group interactions can produce responses that are more complete and more carefully thought out than individual answers in an interview or questionnaire. The following are some methods of evaluation using group information:

- Open Forums - An effective way of getting feedback is by opening up evaluation questions to the whole group. The group can simply be asked for a vote or can be used to generate information in an open question period. The group can also be divided into sub-groups and given the same set of evaluation questions. Then, the sub-group responses can be compared for reliability.

- Meetings - Meetings that occur on a regular basis such as advisory council meetings and staff meetings can also provide information for evaluation. The Community Education staff and the council can evaluate their own meetings, their own goals and objectives and, in addition, can provide information on the effectiveness of the total program.

- Small Group Discussion and Consensus - Another effective way of evaluating group activities is by discussion. If the group is large, it should be divided into sub-groups of not more than 10 people. Each group should have the same questions and a time frame for discussion. The small group responses are then presented verbally by a group member to the larger group, discussed and recorded.

- Participant Evaluation Team - Forming a "participant evaluation team" can be a very effective method for obtaining information. These teams are often appropriate for evaluating large group activities such as classes, workshops, meetings, social gatherings and so on. Use some process of selecting a small group evaluation team at random (such as every tenth person who walks in the room). Then give each participant evaluator a written set of questions or specific kinds of information that needs to be answered or collected. Determine the times they need to evaluate, either during the activity (formative evaluation) or at the end of the meeting or activity.

  All participants should be encouraged to communicate their concerns to members of the identified evaluation team during the class or meeting. The team then meets to discuss concerns and evaluate. The team itself may put together an evaluation report or notes on the meeting may be taken and compiled.

Any, many or all of the data collection methods described on the previous pages, can be used in conducting an evaluation. Determining a method for collecting the data is basically just using a common sense approach. What are the best ways you can get the kind of information you need with the resources you have? For example, an evaluator may ask a source to answer a questionnaire and then follow with an interview to expand and clarify the information. The most important consideration is to select the technique which will give the most complete and valid information possible. Any one evaluation may use several different methods for different audiences, purposes and sources.

Collecting The Information

After the evaluation plan has been developed and the collection methods are determined, the next step in the collecting of data should be relatively easy if the evaluation has been carefully laid out up to this point. However, once the collection has begun, it is important to continually check on its progress. Consistency in collection should be maintained as much as possible. The collection timeline should also be followed. The evaluator(s) should make careful note of any problems that arise during the collection and how they were or were not corrected. The final evaluation report should then discuss any of these problems that did occur. Any such difficulties also need to be reflected in the interpretation of the evaluation.

Analyzing The Data

After the actual data or information collection has taken place, it is time to analyze the information. Many people think this means using complex statistical procedures, but the analysis in most evaluations does not have to be complicated. Most evaluation results require simple tabulation and conversion to percentages. Some subjective information collected, such as in open-ended comments, may need to be coded and categorized before it is analyzed.

Usually themes or trends will begin to emerge in the data results and these need to be noted. The important thing to remember is that the data needs to be analyzed in a way that is most useful to the audience. How specific and how much statistical analysis is required is again determined by audience needs.

If your preliminary planning has carefully identified the standards and criteria that are acceptable to the audience, then the analysis step will be much easier. In fact, this is where all the pre-work in the previous seven steps pays off. This step produces sound data-based findings. At this point judgments can be made based on these findings and recommendations can be made to the various audiences for decision making.

Reporting Evaluation Results

The evaluation results need to be reported in a way that is best suited to each audience needing the answers. It is important that the audience(s) receive the evaluation findings in time to make decisions and this requires reporting results promptly. Effective reporting methods include written reports, verbal presentations at staff/council meetings, audio-visual packages, public forums and so on. There is no single reporting form that is best for all audiences. A number of different reporting methods (using the same data) may be needed for different audiences. This final reporting step demands as much attention and planning time as the other steps in the evaluation.

Although each report form must be determined for each specific audience and purpose, one commonly used form for a comprehensive evaluation report includes:

- Purposes of the evaluation/brief program description
- Critical questions/issues addressed by the evaluation
- Brief summary of evaluation methods used
- Uses and limitations of evaluation results
- Summary of data collection results
- Summary of conclusions/findings
- Recommendations
- Appendices

  a) sample instruments
  b) detailed summary of all data
  c) information about the evaluator(s)
  d) detailed information about data collection methods

In summary, all of the above steps need to be followed in order to complete a useful evaluation. The scope of the evaluation will determine the complexity of this process. As was pointed out earlier, some evaluations only deal with single activities or processes, while others are directed at entire programs. It must be stressed that however complicated or simple your evaluation is, you must still follow these same steps.

EXAMPLE OF THE NINE STEP PROCESS

1. Description

One hundred and fifty eight-week classes are offered through Community Education. Approximately 50 classes are offered during each tri-mester. The classes are either academic or enrichment. Each one enrolls between eight and thirty students. The fee for each class ranges from $12 to $26.

Teachers for the classes are hired eight weeks before the first class. They are paid $8.40 an hour. Each teacher is interviewed by the director and the teaching requirements are provided during the interview.

Teachers are responsible for writing the description for his or her own class to be included in the brochure. They are also required to maintain attendance records and to obtain a final evaluation from each student.

2. Who is to Receive Evaluation Information and for What Purpose?

Community Education Director - to determine if individual classes should be terminated, modified or continued.

Instructor - to obtain feedback to be used to improve class content or class instruction.

State Department of Education - part of Annual Report.

Superintendent and School Board - accountability.

General Community - public relations.

3. Program Parts to be Evaluated

Class Descriptions	Instructor's Teaching Competence
Instructor Inservice	Class Content and Organization
Pay Schedule	Value to Student
Class Records	

4. General Evaluation Questions

Do class descriptions accurately describe the course?

Does the instructor feel he or she received accurate information about what was expected?

Did the instructor inservice help the teacher in his or her conduct of the class?

Did the teacher conduct the class competently?

Was class material organized and presented in a competent manner?

Did student's feel they benefited from the class?

Were appropriate records kept?

Were costs and income appropriate?

Were class objectives met?

5. Evaluation Plan

Class Description

Criteria: Class members should report that the description matched course content.

When	Responsibility	Contact	Process	Cost
Class Completion	Instructor	Students	Discussion and written comments on form	Form Time

Information and Inservice

Criteria: Instructors should report that instructions about duties were clear, that responsibilities were consistent with instruction, and that inservice provided concrete benefit to the instructor on how to organize and teach a Community Education class.

When	Responsibility	Contact	Process	Cost
Class Completion	Director	Instructor	Discussion between director and instructor. Written suggestions.	Time

Cost and Income

Criteria: Fees and class costs should be compared for profit or loss. Instructor's salary should be judged in relation to income and expense. Class should be cost effective.

When	Responsibility	Contact	Process	Cost
Completion of Registration	Director	Coordinator	Cost Comparison Cost Figures	

Record Keeping

Criteria: Records should be kept on enrollment, class attendance and drop outs. Reasons for non-attendance should be determined. Class should maintain student's interest.

When	Responsibility	Contact	Process	Cost
Mid-term and class completion	Director	Instructor	Periodic check of records. Phone calls to class participants.	

Class Content

Criteria: Content should match description. Content should be complete and appropriate. Content should be appropriate for interest and ability level of students.

When	Responsibility	Contact	Process	Cost
Mid-term and class completion	Instructor	Students	Discussion and written evaluation	

Instructor's Competence

Criteria: Student's should be satisfied with skill level and instructor's competence.

When	Responsibility	Contact	Process	Cost
Mid-term and class completion	Director	Students	Instructor should ask for verbal feedback and administer evaluation form	

Benefit to Students

Criteria: Students should report positive feelings about participating in class and should identify specific benefits.

When	Responsibility	Contact	Process	Cost
Class completion	Instructor	Students	Discussion and open-ended questionnaire	

6. Methods for Collecting Information

A. Monitoring

* Class enrollment forms, lists, fee statements
* Class attendance sheets
* Budget
* Records of calls to students

B. Interviews

* Director with instructors concerning interview information, inservice, perceptions of class

* Director with coordinator concerning class costs, class procedures, facilities

* Instructor with students (either selectively or class discussion) on course content, teaching method and class attitudes

C. Questionnaires

* Evaluation form to be completed by teachers at inservice

* Evaluation form on quality of instruction to be completed by students

* Evaluation form on course content to be completed by students

7. Data Collection

In an actual situation the data would be collected according to the time frame included in the plan.

8. Data Analysis

A. Profit and loss statements for each class will be studied and recommendations will be made in regard to decisions on recruitment, promotion, class size and continuation.

B. Enrollment figures will be compared with baseline data from preceding years and recommendations based on the findings will be made.

C. Accuracy of class descriptions will be analyzed and recommendations for improvement will be made.

D. Inservice evaluations will be summarized and information will be used to plan future inservice training.

E. Class content evaluations (both mid-term and final) will be tabulated and analyzed for each class. Recommendations based on this information will be provided to the teacher at mid-term (and at the conclusion of the class) in order that content may be improved.

F. Instructor evaluations will be tabulated and analyzed at the conclusion of the class. The director will meet with the instructor to discuss the evaluations.

G. Participant opinions for all the classes will be tabulated and analyzed. This information will be presented to the instructor and will also be summarized for the final report.

9. Evaluation Report

A. The Community Education Annual Report will include a report on classes, numbers of students, and perceptions of students who participated in the class as well as budget report.

B. The figures on cost and numbers will be included in the annual report to the State Department of Education.

C. An in-house report summarizing the total findings of the evaluation process will be prepared and used by the director, staff and advisory council in determining the next year's program.

D. Financial recommendations that result from the evaluation will be presented to the council to aid in planning and also will be presented to the business manager.

EVALUATION: AN END AND A BEGINNING

Evaluation can be viewed as an end--a purpose, a goal, a plan--but it should not be viewed as an ending. An evaluation of a Community Education program which is well planned, carefully conducted and thoughtfully analyzed is not the termination of a project or activity but instead is the beginning of new activity and direction for the program.

Unless we can see where we've been and unless we can decide that where we've been is where we ought to be, our programs will limp along or founder. Evaluation is the critical ingredient in the total program planning process. It shares importance with needs assessment, setting goals and objectives and program organization. If any of these ingredients are missing or if any of them are not done as well as they can be, the likelihood of having a successful Community Education program is very remote.

Evaluation provides the total picture of the condition of a program. It can provide the good feelings that exist when we know that a program has been done well and it can also provide the motivation to improve and to make subsequent programs even more effective. Evaluation allows one to describe the state of Community Education succinctly and without hesitation.

Finally, evaluation provides credibility for Community Education. When we submit our programs for in-depth evaluation, we announce to our communities and other interested audiences that we are willing to stand up and be counted and we are willing to take the risk of finding ourselves less than perfect. Evaluation provides us with the reputation of responsiveness. When we decide to evaluate we show we are sincerely concerned with serving the needs of the community and, if in any way or for any reason, we are not doing so efficiently and effectively, we are willing to change for the purpose of improvement.

Evaluation is not difficult. It requires only knowledge and commitment. The basic information for conducting an evaluation is included in this guidebook; the commitment must come from community educators and advisory council members.

WHAT DO YOU KNOW NOW?

(The questions at the beginning of the guide book are repeated below. Now that you have read and studied the materials, you may wish to go back over the questions again to check your knowledge and understanding of the main ideas contained in the guidebook.)

1. What is the primary purpose of evaluation in Community Education?
2. What are two important secondary purposes of evaluation?
3. Why are some people reluctant to evaluate?
4. List all possible areas for evaluation in Community Education.
5. What conditions should evaluations satisfy?
6. Why is it important that an evaluation be useful?
7. Why is feasibility important in evaluation?
8. Are ethics important in evaluation? Why?
9. How important is accuracy in evaluation?
10. What is input evaluation?
11. What is context evaluation?
12. What is process evaluation?
13. What is product evaluation?
14. How does formative evaluation relate to input evaluation?
15. Is summative evaluation the same as product evaluation?
16. Can peer review be effective?
17. In what ways can an evaluation expert be utilized?
18. Does evaluation occur during a needs assessment?
19. What role does evaluation play in program planning?
20. Are there evaluation functions during program implementation? What are they?
21. What evaluation questions are asked at the conclusion of a program?
22. Is it important to identify audiences which will be interested in evaluation results? Why?
23. How do you determine what and how much of the program needs to be evaluated?
24. How do you determine general evaluation questions?
25. What would you include in an evaluation plan?
26. How do you determine who will conduct an evaluation?
27. Compare advantages and disadvantages of inside and outside evaluators?

28. Identify several methods for obtaining evaluation information.
29. Does data analysis require a person familiar with statistics?
30. Is an evaluation report important? Why?
31. List some reasons why evaluation is worth the effort.
32. How can Community Education effectively use the information obtained through evaluation?

FOR FURTHER READING

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Seay, M. F. and Associates, Community Education: A Developing Concept. Midland, Michigan: Pendell Publishing Company, 1974.

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Tripodi, Tony, Phillip Fellin, Irwin Epstein, Social Program Evaluation: Guidelines for Health, Education and Welfare Administrators. F. E. Peacock Publishers, Inc. Itasca, Illinois, 1971.

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APPENDICES

Three documents are included as appendices. The first, Checklist for Institutionalizing Evaluation, is a step-by-step process for evaluation. It may be used to expand on the nine-step process included in the guidebook. The second document, Standards for Evaluation of Educational Programs, Projects & Materials, is the summary of evaluation standards developed by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation. The standards are an expansion of the four conditions of evaluation discussed in the text: usefulness, feasibility, ethics and accuracy. The final document is the Self-Appraisal Instrument developed by the Minnesota Community Education Association for use in its Local Program Reviews. This instrument may be used according to the directions to appraise a local Community Education program. Note: If any of these documents are used, please give credit to the source.

APPENDIX 1

CHECKLIST FOR INSTITUTIONALIZING EVALUATION

A. Preparation--Let's get started

1. Obtain a commitment from the leadership of the institution.

_____ Conduct a workshop to help school district personnel consider what is involved in institutionalizing evaluation.

_____ Ensure that the chief policy and administrative functionaries have determined to install and operate an evaluation system.

_____ Establish that some agent has been charged to proceed with the development.

_____ Ensure that some minimum level of resources will be available to begin the development work, and determine that additional funds will be negotiated when needs are clarified.

2. Involve an appropriate range of personnel.

_____ Establish and organize a district working committee and a subcommittee for each school.

_____ Identify and establish communication with the audiences for evaluation.

_____ Engage an external evaluator to advise the working committee and subcommittee.

3. Conceptualize the district's general approach to evaluation.

_____ Clarify the rationale for and purposes of the evaluation system.

_____ Adopt a defensible definition of and conceptual framework for evaluation.

_____ Adopt an appropriate set of standards for guiding and governing evaluation in the system.

4. Plan the development effort.

_____ Draft a school district manual of evaluation policies and procedures.

_____ Assess the status of existing evaluation resources and activities at both the district and school levels.

_____ Develop two-year activity plans at both the district and school levels.

_____ Negotiate the needed level of support for implementation of the activity plans.

B. Implementation--Let's get our act together

1. Conduct high priority evaluations.

_____ Select and train study teams for each evaluation.

_____ Assist each team to design its study.

_____ Monitor the implementation of each study.

_____ Assess the merit of each study and promote use as appropriate.

_____ Use each study to train the participants.

2. Upgrade district and school capabilities for evaluation.

_____ Conduct supplementary training as needed.

_____ Develop a resource library.

_____ Finalize the district's manual of evaluation policies and procedures and submit it for ratification.

_____ Update the plans and budgets for evaluation.

_____ Assign responsibilities for coordinating the ongoing evaluation effort at both the district and school levels.

_____ Explore and utilize relevant opportunities, such as university interns.

C. Recycling--Let's Keep it Going

1. Periodically assess the adequacy of the evaluation system and update as needed.

_____ Check on utilization feasibility, propriety, and technical adequacy.

_____ Conduct a workshop to review the metaevaluation results.

_____ Plan and implement needed changes in the evaluation system.

2. Continually promote credibility and acceptance of the evaluation effort.

_____ Maintain the commitment of the policy and administrative leadership of the institution.

_____ Publicize the evaluation efforts and findings in district and town media.

_____ Promote ongoing exchange of information among the groups involved in evaluation.

3. Maintain the viability of the evaluation system.

_____ Promote utilization and demonstrate cost effectiveness.

_____ Provide needed training.

_____ Maintain the necessary level of financial and administrative support.

_____ Promote the utilization of curriculum-embedded evaluation.

_____ Update evaluation plans and timetables annually.

APPENDIX 2

STANDARDS FOR EVALUATIONS OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS, PROJECTS, & MATERIALS

by The Joint Committee on
Standards for Educational Evaluation
McGraw-Hill, 1983

SUMMARY OF THE STANDARDS

A. Utility Standards

The Utility Standards are intended to ensure that an evaluation will serve the practical information needs of given audiences. These standards are:

A1. Audience Identification

Audiences involved in or affected by the evaluation should be identified, so that their needs can be addressed.

A2. Evaluator Credibility

The persons conducting the evaluation should be both trustworthy and competent to perform the evaluation, so that their findings achieve maximum credibility and acceptance.

A3. Information Scope and Selection

Information collected should be of such scope and selected in such ways as to address pertinent questions about the object of the evaluation and be responsive to the needs and interests of specified audiences.

A4. Valuational Interpretation

The perspectives, procedures, and rationale used to interpret the findings should be carefully described, so that the bases for value judgments are clear.

A5. Report Clarity

The evaluation report should describe the object being evaluated and its context, and the purposes, procedures, and findings of the evaluation, so that the audiences will readily understand what was done, why it was done, what information was obtained, what conclusions were drawn, and what recommendations were made.

A6. Report Dissemination

Evaluation findings should be disseminated to clients and other right-to-know audiences, so that they can assess and use the findings.

A7. Report Timelines

Release of reports should be timely, so that audiences can best use the reported information.

A8. Evaluation Impact

Evaluations should be planned and conducted in ways that encourage follow-through by members of the audiences.

B. Feasibility Standards

The Feasibility Standards are intended to ensure that an evaluation will be realistic, prudent, diplomatic, and frugal; they are:

B1. Practical Procedures

The evaluation procedures should be practical, so that disruption is kept to a minimum, and that needed information can be obtained.

B2. Political Viability

The evaluation should be planned and conducted with anticipation of the different positions of various interest groups, so that their cooperation may be obtained, and so that possible attempts by any of these groups to curtail evaluation operations or to bias or misapply the results can be averted or counteracted.

B3. Cost Effectiveness

The evaluation should produce information of sufficient value to justify the resources expended.

C. Propriety Standards

The Propriety Standards are intended to ensure that an evaluation will be conducted legally, ethically, and with due regard for the welfare of those involved in the evaluation, as well as those affected by its results. These standards are:

C1. Formal Obligation

Obligations of the formal parties to an evaluation (what is to be done, how, by whom, when) should be agreed to in writing, so that these parties are obligated to adhere to all conditions of the agreement or formally to renegotiate it.

C2. Conflict of Interest

Conflict of interest, frequently unavoidable, should be dealt with openly and honestly, so that it does not compromise the evaluation processes and results.

C3. Full and Frank Disclosure

Oral and written evaluation reports should be open, direct, and honest in their disclosure of pertinent findings, including the limitations of the evaluation.

C4. Public's Right to Know

The formal parties to an evaluation should respect and assure the public's right to know, within the limits of other related principles and statutes, such as those dealing with public safety and the right to privacy.

C5. Rights of Human Subjects

Evaluations should be designed and conducted, so that the rights and welfare of the human subjects are respected and protected.

C6. Human Interactions

Evaluators should respect human dignity and worth in their interactions with other persons associated with an evaluation.

C7. Balanced Reporting

The evaluation should be complete and fair in its presentation of strengths and weaknesses of the object under investigation, so that strengths can be built upon and problem areas addressed.

C8. Fiscal Responsibility

The evaluator's allocation and expenditure of resources should reflect sound accountability procedures and otherwise be prudent and ethically responsible.

D. Accuracy Standards

The Accuracy Standards are intended to ensure that an evaluation will reveal and convey technically adequate information about the features of the object being studied that determine its worth or merit. These standards are:

D1. Object Identification

The object of the evaluation (program, project, material) should be sufficiently examined, so that the form(s) of the object being considered in the evaluation can be clearly identified.

D2. Context Analysis

The context in which the program, project, or material exists should be examined in enough detail, so that its likely influences on the object can be identified.

D3. Described Purposes and Procedures

The purposes and procedures of the evaluation should be monitored and described in enough detail, so that they can be identified and assessed.

D4. Defensible Information Sources

The sources of information should be described in enough detail, so that the adequacy of the information can be assessed.

D5. Valid Measurement

The information-gathering instruments and procedures should be chosen or developed and then implemented in ways that will assure that the interpretation arrived at is valid for the given use.

D6. Reliable Measurement

The information-gathering instruments and procedures should be chosen or developed and then implemented in ways that will assure that the information obtained is sufficiently reliable for the intended use.

D7. Systematic Data Control

The data collected, processed, and reported in an evaluation should be reviewed and corrected, so that the results of the evaluation will not be flawed.

D8. Analysis of Quantitative Information

Quantitative information in an evaluation should be appropriately and systematically analyzed to ensure supportable interpretations.

D9. Analysis of Qualitative Information

Qualitative information in an evaluation should be appropriately and systematically analyzed to ensure supportable interpretations.

D10. Justified Conclusions

The conclusions reached in an evaluation should be explicitly justified, so that the audiences can assess them.

D11. Objective Reporting

The evaluation procedures should provide safeguards to protect the evaluation findings and reports against distortion by the personal feelings and biases of any party to the evaluation.

APPENDIX 3

MINNESOTA COMMUNITY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

LOCAL PROGRAM REVIEW SELF-APPRAISAL

SELF-APPRAISAL INSTRUCTIONS

The procedure for completion of the Self-Appraisal is as follows:

1. The Community Education Director describes the activities specified in each content area. Please be as concise as possible. Each description to be filled out by the Director is preceded by DIR.

2. The Community Education Director then sends the Self-Appraisal, complete with descriptions, to each Advisory Council member.

3. The Advisory Council member rates, with a (√) mark each procedure as described by the Community Education Director. Each rating to be filled out by the Advisory Council is preceded by A.C.

4. At an Advisory Council meeting, the descriptions and ratings should be discussed and revised as necessary. Following the discussion, the Advisory Council must come to a concensus on each rating.

5. The Community Education Director will return the completed Self-Appraisal (with descriptions and concensus ratings) to the Team Leader.

Director respond to DIR. questions.

Advisory Council respond to A.C. questions.

I. ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

Community Education is . . .
. . . an ongoing community assessment process. Needs and resources must be identified. Goals and objectives must be developed. Programs must be evaluated and measured for success in attaining continuing goals.

DIR. 1. Describe the procedures used to identify needs within the community.

A.C. 2. How would you rate this procedure?

_____A. Needs little or no improvement.
_____B. Needs some improvement.
_____C. Needs much improvement.
_____D. Not included in the program.
_____E. I don't know.

DIR. 3. Describe the procedures used to identify resources (facilities, people, money, organizations) which might be used to meet community needs.

A.C. 4. How would you rate this procedure?

_____A. Needs little or no improvement.
_____B. Needs some improvement.
_____C. Needs much improvement.
_____D. Not included in the program.
_____E. I don't know.

DIR. 5. Describe the procedures used to develop the written goals and objectives for the community education program.

A.C. 6. How would you rate this procedure?

_____A. Needs little or no improvement.
_____B. Needs some improvement.
_____C. Needs much improvement.
_____D. Not included in the program.
_____E. I don't know.

DIR. 7. Describe the procedures used to measure the attainment of program goals.

A.C. 8. How would you rate this procedure?

_____A. Needs little or no improvement.
_____B. Needs some improvement.
_____C. Needs much improvement.
_____D. Not included in the program.
_____E. I don't know.

DIR. 9. Describe the procedures used to revise programs related to continuing goals.

A.C. 10. How would you rate this procedure?

_____A. Needs little or no improvement.
_____B. Needs some improvement.
_____C. Needs much improvement.
_____D. Not included in the program.
_____E. I don't know.

II. INTERAGENCY COOPERATION

Community Education is . . .
. . . coordinating efforts with other agencies by establishing a regular cooperative process. Minnesota law (MS 121.88 Subd. 4) requires that an advisory council have a stated policy to reduce and eliminate program duplication.

DIR. 1. Describe the activities used in this community to coordinate efforts by various agencies that attempt to respond to community needs.

DIR. 2. Describe activities conducted by community education which assist other organizations.

DIR. 3. Describe efforts by community education to eliminate unnecessary duplication of programs or services provided by community agencies.

A.C. 4. How would you rate the coordinating efforts with other community agencies?

_____A. Needs little or no improvement.
_____B. Needs some improvement.
_____C. Needs much improvement.
_____D. Not included in the program.
_____E. I don't know.

III. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Community Education is . . .
. . . community involvement in local decision-making. A representative advisory council allows accurate community input. An appropriately positioned director of Community Education can maximize the community's contribution.

DIR. 1. Describe how the organization of the community education advisory council contributes to representative citizen involvement in the local decision-making process.

DIR. 2. Describe how the activities of the community education advisory council contribute to representative citizen involvement in the local decision-making process.

A.C. 3. How would you rate the advisory council as a vehicle for citizen involvement in the local decision-making process?

_____A. Needs little or no improvement.
_____B. Needs some improvement.
_____C. Needs much improvement.
_____D. Not included in the program.
_____E. I don't know.

DIR. 4. Describe the relationship between the community education staff and other school district staff.

A.C. 5. How would you rate the integration of community education with other school district activities?

_____A. Needs little or no improvement.
_____B. Needs some improvement.
_____C. Needs much improvement.
_____D. Not included in the program.
_____E. I don't know.

IV. PROGRAMMING

Community Education is . . .
. . . a balanced program with a variety of classes/activities for people of all ages, abilities and interests.

DIR. 1. Describe the scope of the community education program.

DIR. 2. In which topic areas and for which age groups do you provide high or low concentration of program activity? Mark H for High Concentration, L for Low Concentration, N for No Program.

	Academic	Comm. Serv.	Cultural	Enrich	Recrea-tion	Other-List
Preschool						
K-6						
6-12						
Adult						
Senior Cit.						

DIR. 3. Describe the special programs that have been developed in response to your needs identification process.

DIR. 4. Describe the major successes in your community education program.

DIR. 5. Describe the major difficulties encountered in producing your community education program.

DIR. 6. Why do some persons not participate?

A.C. 7. How would you rate these programs overall in meeting your goals for a balanced program for all ages, abilities, gender (male and female) and interests.

_____A. Needs little or no improvement.
_____B. Needs some improvement.
_____C. Needs much improvement.
_____D. Not included in the program.
_____E. I don't know.

V. ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

Community Education is . . .
. . . the most efficient use of funds, and staff available to the Community Education Department for all segments of the community.

DIR. 1. Describe the procedures used to develop, adopt and monitor the community education budget.

DIR. 2. Describe the extent of involvement in the budgeting process by:

Community Education Director

Advisory Council

Superintendent

School Board

Other funding sources

A.C. 3. How would you rate this budgeting procedure as a method for community involvement in the local decision-making process?

_____A. Needs little or no improvement.
_____B. Needs some improvements.
_____C. Needs much improvement.
_____D. Not included in the program.
_____E. I don't know.

DIR. 4. Describe the procedures used to manage the fiscal affairs (approval for expenditures and allocation of revenue) for community education funds.

DIR. 5. Describe the procedures used for selection and supervision of the community education activities.

A.C. 6. How would you rate the overall administration of community education activities?

_____A. Needs little or no improvement.
_____B. Needs some improvement.
_____C. Needs much improvement.
_____D. Not included in the program.
_____E. I don't know.

VI. IN-SERVICE TRAINING

Community Education is . . .
. . . on the leading edge of education and community growth in Minnesota. In-service training is very important for both professionals and lay people in order to keep current with the concept and process.

DIR. 1. Describe the in-service training activities conducted to increase the understanding of the concept of community education and to increase the effectiveness of those involved in conducting community education programs.

DIR. 2. Describe training for:

Community Education Director

Community Education Staff

School District support staff

School District teachers and administrators

Advisory Council members

Other citizens

A.C. 3. How would you rate the in-service training activities?

____A. Needs little or no improvement.
____B. Needs some improvement.
____C. Needs much improvement.
____D. Not included in the program.
____E. I don't know.

VII. PUBLIC RELATIONS

Community Education is . . .
. . . an effective public information program designed to inform the public, promote activities/programs, and develop a positive image of the community.

DIR. 1. Describe the efforts designed to inform the general public of the goals, programs and processes of community education.

DIR. 2. Describe the efforts designed to develop within the general public a positive image of their local community.

DIR. 3. Describe other public relations activities or responsibilities carried on by community education.

A.C. 4. How would you rate these public relations efforts?

_____A. Needs little or no improvement.
_____B. Needs some improvement.
_____C. Needs much improvement.
_____D. Not included in the program.
_____E. I don't know.

VIII. FACILITIES USAGE

Community Education is . . .
. . . extending the use of the school and community facilities beyond their normal use.

DIR. 1. Describe the procedures used to extend the use of school and community facilities by community groups and individuals.

DIR. 2. Describe the extent and variety of community group use of school facilities.

DIR. 3. Describe which groups (if any) are required to pay for use of school facilities.

DIR. 4. Describe any problems which restrict extended use of school facilities.

A.C. 5. How would you rate your efforts to extend use of school and community facilities?

_____A. Needs little or no improvement.
_____B. Needs some improvement.
_____C. Needs much improvement.
_____D. Not included in program.
_____E. I don't know.

This instrument was prepared by the Local Program Review Task Force (Dr. Don Spencer - Task Force Leader). It is the property of the MCEA and is used by the Minnesota State Department of Education by permission during Fiscal Year 1983.